



[Alvin W. Boese Papers.](#)

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Subject:

September 7, 1973

TO:

R.M. ADAMS - EXECUTIVE - 220-14E

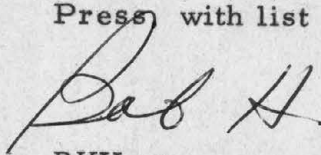
A.W. BOESE - CORP. INNOVATIVE - 53-5

J.H. PRAGER - CORP. TECH. PLNG. & COORD. - 220-11W

FROM:

R.K. HENNESY - PUBLIC RELATIONS - 220-6W

Attached is the Al Boese story which was picked up by the Associated Press with list of papers we are aware have printed it.



RKH:es

attachment

High School Dropout Now Top Scientist with 3M

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP)—Alvin W. Boese dropped out of high school on his sophomore year in a move he says both he and the school found "mutually agreeable."

Today, with no more formal education, Boese has risen to the highest professional rank a Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing (3M) Co. scientist can achieve. He's a research associate in the firm's corporate innovative laboratory.

Boese, 63, developed an unwoven fabric which 3M first marketed in 1945 in its "Sash-reen" giftwrap ribbon. Since then, he and other 3M scientists have developed whole generations of related products—from surgeon's masks to hair-

setting tape.

The mustachioed scientist says circumstances played a large role in his being where he is today. When he was in school, his interests centered on history and literature.

In fact, it was a teacher's lack of knowledge in ancient history that proved to be the deciding factor when Boese dropped out at age 16.

"I found out in 30 seconds that she didn't know a damn thing about history compared to what I knew," Boese explained. A different teacher, he said, might have changed his fate entirely.

Boese didn't take any science courses during his short high school career and he has his

doubts about how well he'd do in them now.

"If I had to take a 12th grade chemistry or physics exam today, I'm sure I'd flunk," he said. "I never learned the reasons certain things happen, but I've gotten pretty good at predicting what might happen under certain circumstances and then testing it out."

After brief periods as a hotel bellhop and a drug store clerk, Boese joined 3M in 1930. He worked there as an office boy for three years. Then he moved to the laboratory where he spent his time washing beakers.

"That's when I found out that a lot of scientists didn't really know what they were doing," Boese joked. "They couldn't have known, or there wouldn't have been that many dirty beakers."

It was 1939 when Boese was given an assignment to develop a noncorrosive back for electrical tape. He didn't know anything about what was involved and spent an entire summer reading on fibers.

"I've always read a lot and never had any trouble getting information I wanted and ignoring that I didn't want," he said.

It wasn't until 1958, when polyester fibers were developed, that the original problem was solved. But in the meantime Boese and his fellow researchers had opened up a whole new area for 3M in nonwoven fibers.

"It doesn't come easy," Boese said of the creative process. "It always was something I had to strain for."

His greatest incentive, Boese said, was self-imposed guilt.

"I've got to put pressure on myself. An idea gets bouncing around in my head and, before long, it begins to bother me. I have to do something with it," he explained.

"I don't do it easily. I don't do it readily. And I don't do it immediately. Then I get to feeling guilty. But, even then, I don't do anything with that idea until the guilt gets so strong that I can't fight it anymore. Then I'm ready."

Boese and his wife, Irene, are the parents of three grown children, all of whom finished school. And although Boese thinks it's still possible for someone with as little education as he had to rise to a high position, he is quick to name college as the first step for anyone planning such a career.

But he's also quick to point out what he believes to be an unjustified prejudice against dropouts. Citing television commercials and signs on buses to the effect that "to be a dropout is to be nothing," Boese said the approach is poor and of no help to persons who have dropped out.

"Don't tell him he's down in a mudhole and kick him," Boese said. "His powers of curiosity and observation should count for something."

"There are many things you can do just with the eyes and ears Mother Nature gave you."

Al Boese should know.

STORY APPEARED IN:

BRainerd Daily Dispatch
OWATONNA PEOPLES PRESS
ALBERT LEA EVENING TRIBUNE
DULUTH HERALD
INTERNATIONAL FALLS JOURNAL
ST. PAUL DISPATCH



—AP Wirephoto.

SCIENTIST EXAMINES FABRIC

Alvin W. Boese of 3M Co.

★

★

Dropout Develops Rewarding Career As 3M Scientist

By MARTHA MALAN
AP Writer

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REPORT OF BIRTH-DEPT. OF HEALTH, ST. PAUL, MINN.

Full Name <i>Alvin H. Borey</i>		FATHER		Maiden Name <i>Mina Trick</i>		MOTHER	
Residence <i>571 Como av</i>				Residence <i>571 Como av</i>			
Color or Race <i>W</i>	Age at Last Birthday (Years) <i>29</i>	Color or Race <i>W</i>	Age at Last Birthday (Years) <i>26</i>				
Birthplace <i>St Paul Minn</i>				Birthplace <i>St Paul Minn</i>			
Occupation <i>Ry clk</i>				Occupation <i>house wife</i>			
Sex of Child <i>Male</i>	Twin Triplet or other? <i>Alvin W.</i>			Number In order of Birth <i>2</i>	Legitimate? <i>Yes</i>		
Date of Birth <i>March 24</i>	19 <i>10</i>			Place of Birth			
(Month)	(Day)	(Year)					
Number of Child of this Mother <i>2</i>				Number of Children, of this Mother, now living <i>2</i>			
(Signature) <i>Alvin H. Borey</i>				(Attending physician or midwife.)			

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct photocopy of the record of birth filed, recorded and preserved in the office of R. B. J. Schoch, M. D., Health Officer and Registrar.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Bureau of Health of the City of St. Paul, Minnesota, this *14th* day of *Feb.* 1956.

(Signed)

Grace Zelinski
Deputy Registrar

MINNESOTA MINING AND MANUFACTURING COMPANY

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

SUBJECT:

August 17, 1960

TO: F. R. OWEN GIFT WRAP AND FABRIC ENGINEERING 209-BS

FROM: JOAN SHOWALTER GIFT WRAP AND FABRIC ADMINISTRATION 42-2E

At your request I have summarized below Mr. Boese's accomplishments since joining the Company in December, 1930.

Mr. Boese started with 3M in December of 1930 as an office boy. In 1934 he transferred to the Factory as an inspector in the Tape Department.

In 1938 through January 1946, he was Product Supervisor in the Profab Laboratory, and in April of that year was promoted to Sr. Pilot Engineer. In August of 1946 he was promoted to Jr. Product Manufacturing Manager in Profab, and held that same position in the Ribbon Laboratory after transferring there in November, 1949.

In August, 1953, he was promoted to the position of Technical Director of the Ribbon Division, and in July, 1958, was promoted to his present position of General Manufacturing Manager, Gift Wrap and Fabric Division.

Mr. Boese also started research on non-wovens in 1940, developing the first 3M ribbon known as "MISTLON."

/js

Alvin W. Boese

by

His Oldest Son, Donald L. Boese

Summer, 1994

On Saturday, April 9, 1994, I took Dad's papers to the Minnesota Historical Society where they were warmly received. As an historian myself, I was delighted to find a safe repository for those papers and know Dad would have been intrigued that what he had so carefully kept as a record of his life's work will now be available for the use and inspection of future generations.

Education

Dad dropped out of school during his early high school years. After that, he held menial jobs, including one where he was cleaning in the slaughter houses of the South St. Paul stockyards, before he was hired to clean laboratory equipment at 3-M. Dad's father, who worked for a seed company (and briefly owned one in downtown St. Paul which he lost due to lack of business acumen), gave him Tarbell's Life of Lincoln on his sixteenth birthday about the time Dad left school. I never thought to ask Dad if he read that four volume set at the time, but it certainly illustrates the type of self-education which Dad did achieve. He read history, finding the Romans of particular attraction. Anthropology and archeology were other interests along with wide literary pursuits. Natural history was another topic he appreciated and he liked bird watching. He accumulated a large library and books were basic to his life (something he passed on to me). Art and art history were his strong areas and he began collecting objet d'art as he started his travels for 3-M. He frequently went to the Walker and was active in a variety of Minnesota art groups. As he could afford it he acquired a major assemblage of works of Minnesota artists, pottery and paintings especially. When I was teaching at Itasca Community College in the seventies and eighties, the art instructor and I took groups of students to various Twin Cities events. She always placed high value on bringing them to Dad's house to observe, as

she put it, "Living with Art." Dad and Mother were always gracious hosts on those occasions.

Another major interest of Dad's was cooking and the history of cooking. He had a large collection of cook books and was an excellent chef and his dinner parties were always popular. He sometimes did the cooking for parties at the homes of others, not 3-M people, but collectors and arts advocates, and he always enjoyed the company of the "art and theater and music people" who were present. Beef Bourguignon and cassoulet were among his favorite dishes for large groups.

Well-read and knowledgeable Dad was, but a peculiarity was that since he had done all this on his own he mis-pronounced names and words, sometimes in bizarre fashion. His French cooking pronunciations were far off base even while he knew precisely what the terms meant.

Dad was totally supportive when it came to education for his children. He had always visualized my becoming an archeologist and I grew up with the idea. In retrospect I think he vicariously wanted the experience through me. I followed that path at the University of Minnesota and enjoyed the digs and began graduate school still in anthropology, but I had become enamored of history and decided to academically start over switching to that area. Dad remained totally supportive. I remember when I was maybe 15, a shirttail relative, a young man in a shiny cheap suit who had some minor clerical job asked me "what I wanted to be," and I replied, "an archeologist." He looked aghast thinking of his own "business orientation" and stated that Dad must be disappointed that I wasn't intent on following in his footsteps. Dad just kind of glowered and didn't reply, and then later said to me, "Remember, somebody has to try to figure out why the human race has done so many stupid things!"

Well read, Dad was of what could be called a "liberal persuasion." Yet he was also forceful in his opinions and came to conclusions that he assumed we shared - and it was always easier to do so than to argue.

Travel

Because he was so directly involved in all aspects of non-woven fabrics, Dad travelled a good deal to, among other things, market his product and buy raw materials. He had taken a car trip to California to visit relatives as a child but beyond that he had done little travelling before his 3-M mistlon career began. He told me once of the sheer exhilaration he felt when he went to New York the first

time. As he left the Grand Central Station and had his first view of the great city he felt an overwhelming sense of satisfaction that his 3-M work had led him there. He had carefully decided that the Algonquin Hotel was where he would stay and he did, and continued to do so on his many subsequent trips to New York. He mentioned to me once that he was rather nervous that 3-M might raise objections to the expense of the place and to the fine restaurants he chose with equal care, but they never did and he appreciated that.

In the 1940's and 50's and 60's he made full use of his opportunities to dine at the notable New York restaurants of the time. He learned much and often applied it to his own cooking. Again his mispronunciations entered in. At a French restaurant he mangled the pronunciation of what he wanted and a scornful waiter brought him something else. The waiter learned in no uncertain terms that Dad knew exactly what he had ordered and the correct dish was forthcoming. Dad liked to tell the story of a visit to a classic Italian restaurant in company with a less cosmopolitan 3-M associate. When the waiter came to the table Dad's companion announced he wanted the best spaghetti they had. The New York no-nonsense waiter replied, "Any Wop can make spaghetti and we don't have any here!" Dad helped his friend make a different choice. At Dad's funeral another associate remembered Dad going to Tiffany's in the early 1940's to convince the manager he needed non-lint mistlon to polish jewelry. A haughty clerk tried to block the Minnesotan, and found no success as Dad ignored his objections and bludgeoned past, clerk flapping along behind, to find the manager and get a hearing.

I went along on several of those trips as a child. One was to New York and Boston and another to Louisville and several were to Chicago. Taking Dad to the busy, cavernous St. Paul depot and listening to all those announcements of arriving and departing trains and then going to meet him is a very strong childhood memory. Once in awhile Mother went with him, but usually he went alone. Dad and Mother took a few car trips, but outside of business he didn't often go out of the state. He and Mother had favorite places in Minnesota where they liked to go for lunch and sometimes overnight. Dad talked of going to Europe when he retired, but he never did.

And, in regard to travel, Dad slipped on ice about 1946 and badly damaged his left arm. He suffered with a cast for many months and through the summer and had various operations but the arm remained quite crooked. (After his death I inherited his collection of suit coats, we being of similar size, and I still think of him all these years later when I notice much cuff showing on the left where he had had them altered.) He never again drove a car after that and

Mother and I did much chauffeuring and catering to his strong penchant for just "going for a drive."

Christmas

Dad's favorite time of the year was Christmas. The season activated him, it lent him energy, and he approached it with the greatest of zeal and pleasure. The house he decorated lavishly. Every available space was draped with pine and hung with angels and an elaborate assortment of ornaments. The tree was as big as he could fit into the livingroom and was crowded with lights and ornaments. He and Mother regularly went to and gave holiday parties. The big night was Christmas Eve. Primarily Mother's side of the family was in attendance. Twenty to thirty people was normal. Dad had been planning and preparing the Christmas feast for weeks and it was always my pleasure to arrive a day or two before and go shopping with him, at the Highland Park Lunds in the last decade, and together we would discuss and choose needed ingredients. Dad's method of shopping was to take the most expensive when there were choices. I have seen him on a number of occasions return to the shelf whatever brand when he found another that was more expensive - without ever explaining, it was clear that he thought if it cost more it must be better. Relatives and other guests arrived at about 6:00 to be served from the bar and to find a variety of hors d'oeuvres. Dad always liked making different kinds of cheese and meat and fish spreads, nicely decorated, to be eaten with bread rounds or crackers. Dinner was served buffet style with people sitting wherever they could find room. Ham (not the water-added kind...) was often featured along with a celery salad that Dad made frequently (I am no mean chef myself, but I have never been able to duplicate it and I miss it!) and rich mashed or scalloped potatoes and many side dishes. Often kids were provided with a big cloth to sit on and a separate menu. Probably the Christmas Eve dish Dad and I prepared most often was a wide variety of good sausages cooked with sauerkraut and wine. Good breads and wines and Mother's Christmas cookies were always included. Ironically, Dad did tend to get crabby as those Christmas Eves wore on - they had taken much energy and that took its toll or maybe he just didn't like the idea that after so much preparation it would all soon be over.

We have kept the Christmas Eve tradition going and my cousin Cynthia, who is about 55 mentioned to me this past Christmas that she was at a recent gathering where the subject of how the holiday was celebrated was discussed. She was, of course, the only one who could say that she did exactly the same now as she had done more than 50 years ago! The day I write this section is the day that Mother and Dad's lifetime accumulation of goods was sold as mother has just moved to an apartment. Interesting that while she left behind so

much to be disposed of so as to simplify her life, she kept far more Christmas goods than she will ever need.

Christmas morning was for immediate family. Presents were opened with much anticipation - Mother and Dad had put as much into their selection as into all other aspects of the holiday. When I was a child the gifts were always on a major scale - one year a chemistry set with a laboratory table and equipment to go with it, another year an electric train and all the extras, on another a typewriter and desk. Christmas brunch included champagne and most always English muffins, interesting jams, homemade corned beefhash, eggs prepared in various ways and a selection of meats, all served on Christmas dishes with the table decorated to match the rest of the house. Always, those gatherings were handled with flair and class. Dad popping the champagne cork with gusto comes back to me as I think of them.

Religion

Dad was not a religious person and he found little of satisfaction in Christianity. Neither he nor Mother attended church, but my sister went to a Catholic school for a number of years and I was sent off to church from time to time with various neighbors who, I suppose, were worried about my future. Then, for a long series of Saturdays I took the bus from White Bear to my grandmother's (my mother's mother) house in Midway in St. Paul, and then to the church across the street for Lutheran confirmation classes. Dad never said anything about it until I was almost finished, and then, I remember the incident so clearly, he asked me, "Do you believe all of that?" Well, I didn't, but I went ahead for the confirmation ceremony and then never returned to church involvements. At Christmas, some of the relatives who were very religious liked to pray before dinner. I remember Dad snapping at me one time as we returned to the kitchen after he had listened to thanks to the deity for this and that, "Well, I planned it and I bought it and I cooked it and I sure didn't sense I was getting any help!"

Houses and Finances

Dad had good taste and he liked nice things. For a long time there was little money to indulge those tastes. I remember at a very young age my Mother and I sharing a snowball purchased from a bakery truck because there wasn't enough money for two. I remember Dad having to walk long distances when there wasn't enough money for carfare. We lived with my Mother's parents when I was born. A few years ago I asked my Mother if I could have a stored set of three aluminum triangular shaped pans which shared a single

insertable handle. I wanted them mainly because I had grown up seeing them in use and a bit of nostalgia had entered in. As she gave them to me Mother explained that they had been acquired about 1937 and were called "Depression Pans" as they were designed to fit all together on a single burner thereby saving fuel. Dad, she told me, and now I can understand why, had always hated them! Gradually over the years Dad's income increased. By the 1960's he was financially comfortable and enjoyed the pursuit of his collecting interests. He was always generous with his children and I remember him saying to me on a number of occasions when I was presented with a nice piece of pottery or cookware or a painting or an archeological treasure he had found in New York or fine stamps for my collection or a few bottles of good wine or liquor, "Here - enjoy these because there isn't going to be anything left when I'm gone."

Dad always was certain that his collections would increase in value and he put his money into them instead of into retirement accounts or savings or insurance. The collections would provide necessary means during retirement, he thought, and would be Mother's legacy when he was gone. He used to so often tell stories of how this or that item had increased ten or twenty or a hundred times in value since he had bought it. Well, value is only what someone will pay for a "collectable." In the past couple of years the collections have been dispersed, some through a Chicago auction gallery. And, a few items did bring a good return, but many did not. The collection of large paintings by Minnesota artists that were quite spectacular on the walls of their homes did not fare anywhere near so well in monetary terms as Dad had hoped would be the case. For the sake of Mother's future, she would have been better served by insurance policies and savings. But, Dad had the sheer enjoyment of finding and purchasing, often by making monthly payments, and relishing his treasures and Mother shared in that. I cannot fault him for his decision to collect rather than save, even if the results were not what he expected, and I don't believe my Mother does either even though her nest egg grows ever smaller.

Mother and Dad's first house acquired about 1938 was a small place on Fernwood Avenue in Roseville. The big move came about 1942 and that was to a large house with a big yard in Birchwood on the south shore of White Bear Lake. The place had once belonged to a medical doctor and barrels of his belongings were still stored there. I remember Dad building a fire in the backyard and destroying all that was burnable including medicines and chemicals; who knows what was put into the air that day. There was also a sliced human heart preserved in formeldehyhde and that was burned also; the smell and the sight have always remained with me and while there are few foods on this earth that I don't relish, heart of any kind I carefully avoid. About 1948 an even larger

house was purchased in neighboring Bellaire and then that was sold and on what was left on the seven acre property a single story "modern" house was built into a hillside with big picture windows looking over the lake. White Bear was a good place to grow up and I graduated in 1953 from White Bear High School. Over the years the area was also undergoing much development (It astonishes me when I look today at the once wide open spaces where we avidly sought dewberries and now see only asphalt and buildings.) and in 1954 we moved to Forest Lake. It was isolated and it was also inconvenient, especially so with Dad not doing any driving. I was still at home while attending the University and I dropped Dad at work on my way there. In 1956 another major move took place, this time back to St. Paul. Today, what seems the real family home is the 803 Lincoln Avenue house that would serve as the family base for two decades. It was a gracious and spacious house and suited Mother and Dad and their collections very well. It was a shock when we children were informed after Dad's retirement that the house was to be sold. But the replacement was the rented upper two floors of a beautiful old home at 664 Lincoln. There was plenty of room and having disposed of a lot of their furniture, Mother and Dad bought much that was new, and this elegant place suited them very well. Mother continued to live there until 1994 when she moved to an apartment just across Selby Avenue from the Cathedral. She enjoys a lovely view of downtown St. Paul.

The Farm

About 1960, Dad bought a run down farm with several hundred acres of land in Pine County just west of the little town of Cloverton. "The Farm" became a big part of our lives. Gradually it was fixed up and refurbished to become a most comfortable retreat. Amenities were many with good food and wine and many comforts, but never a telephone. An old sheepbarn provided a large quantity of beautifully aged gray wood and the inside of the Farm was paneled with it and adorned with works from Dad's collection of art. It was very striking, although a neighboring farmer, still dependant on mules in the 1960's, couldn't imagine covering the "nice" faded old wallpaper with such rubbish. Dad had no mechanical abilities and no inclination to do household repairs or remodeling at the Farm or at home. His 3-M lab, however, provided a plethora of talent for such. Regularly Dad would cook and provide his famous abilities as genial host for 3-M weekend expeditions to the Farm, and in return major Farm upkeep and remodeling were accomplished nicely.

Many times I would drive up from Mankato where I was teaching in the 1960's and with my son Steve along, we would pick up Dad and head for the Farm. Those were always memorable times and especially so our tradition of leaving

after Thanksgiving dinner and having the rest of that long weekend there. The Farm got much use and the log we kept records our numerous visits. One thing Dad always insisted on was that whoever was there would leave the place scrupulously clean upon departure. Today, my brother Steve, who lives in Duluth, owns the Farm, and while I having moved to northern Minnesota made ever less use of it and now rarely go there, my son Steve and his children are regular visitors. The Farm was important to Dad and at his funeral several of his colleagues spoke of their own strong memories of the place and Dad's "country squire" presence there.

Career

In retrospect, as I looked through Dad's papers, I realized the dimensions of his accomplishment in taking a basic idea and turning it into a career and a life's work. He was proud of creating the lifestyle he provided for us on the basis of his energy and perserverance and his determination that non-woven fabric would become important to 3-M. He mentioned to me once that his mother never made any mention of or indicated any understanding of his success, and he felt badly about that. As I look back, I think the rest of us in the family also took quite for granted his accomplishment. It was just always there, and only now do I put it into the broader perspective that it wasn't "just there" but was achieved on the basis of Dad's drive for accomplishment. He told me once after his retirement that he would never want to go back and do it all over again. There had been too many obstacles and too many "big battles." He mentioned also that as he received quite a bit of attention in his retirement years when entrepreneurship became fashionable and he was interviewed and asked for advice and asked to speak that he would have appreciated receiving just a bit more recognition during his career instead of after. He was, however, elected a member of the Carleton Society, the honor organization for those who have made considerable technical contribution to 3-M and he liked to note that he was one of the very few who had achieved that distinction without a Ph.D. Dad did, of course, take pride in his work and he fully appreciated the opportunities he did find with 3-M. I don't believe he ever regretted his long association with the company

Retirement and Death

Dad relished his retirement years and was never bored or lacking in things to do as he pursued his many interests. Although he had been heavy most of his life, his health was relatively good. He told me he was astonished at how little food he now needed to sustain himself, and how difficult it

was to try to not overindulge on the cooking that he still did so well and that remained such an avid hobby.

During the last year of his life, Dad's personality began to change in many little ways. I became concerned when one of my children called to tell me he had been talking to Dad on the phone and what he was hearing him say made no sense. Only later did we learn that Dad had been becoming ever more possessive of Mother to the point where he sometimes even blocked her from leaving whatever room they were in. After much medical investigation which for so many months offered no diagnosis, as the symptoms worsened, we learned that Dad had a cancerous brain tumor. Now, in retrospect, the last months of his life do not seem like such a long period as they did then. An operation temporarily brought Dad back as we knew him. I well remember him calling me when he had returned home from the hospital and I answered the phone to hear, "This is a voice returned from the Grave" delivered in a jovial way. And I was glad to hear Dad sounding good. He convinced himself that all was well, but of course it wasn't and the symptoms of before soon returned as the cancer grew again. Dad had always had a very good relationship with people in service jobs, ie, cashiers or waitresses or plumbers always enjoyed his banter and friendliness and easy going style. We felt badly when Dad in his last period struck and hurt a nurse who was trying to attend to him, and to all of us that event signaled the end. At Dad's funeral there was a person who none of us recognized and when I approached him he explained he was a St. Paul policeman who had come to know Dad by name, but nothing else about him. Having enjoyed their bits of conversation, upon seeing the obituary he went out of his way to attend the funeral. To me, that policeman's gesture served as a good summation of the kind of person Dad was and of his approach to life. I was one of those who spoke at the funeral and I drew from a work about Sophocles that Dad had acquired in the 1940's to point out that Dad had fully lived the Greek ideal of making the most of life. Sophocles' words to the effect that one should not mourn the passing but rather rejoice for a long life well-lived seemed very appropriate. My Mother choose the simple inscription on his tombstone which reads Alvin W. Boese - Husband, Father, Grandfather. He is buried in Elmhurst Cemetary not far from his Mother. The earlier generations of the German side of the family are also in that cemetary.

Donald L Boese
Bovey Minnesota
July 27, 1994

Subject:

August 16, 1973

TO: ALVIN W. BOESE - CORP. INNOVATIVE LAB - 53-3

FROM: ROBERT K. HENNESY - PUBLIC RELATIONS - 220-6W

I know you're getting younger every day, but this (attached copy) is ridiculous.

Seriously, the early edition of the Dispatch that goes into Wisconsin and outlying territory apparently had this picture transposed with your story. One of our fellows spotted this and sent it to me. The error was corrected in later editions to the metropolitan area. I thought you should be aware of this in case someone had seen an issue with the wrong photo.


RKH:es

attachment

Dropout Develops Rewarding Career As 3M Scientist

By MARTHA MALAN
AP Writer

Alvin W. Boese dropped out of high school on his sophomore year in a move he says both he and the school found "mutually agreeable."

Today, with no more formal education, Boese has risen to the highest professional rank a 3M Co. scientist can achieve. He's a research associate in the firm's corporate innovative laboratory.

Boese, 63, developed an unwoven fabric which 3M first marketed in 1945 in its "Sasheen" giftwrap ribbon. Since then, he and other 3M scientists have developed whole generations of related products—from surgeon's masks to hairsetting tape.

The mustachioed scientist says circumstances played a large role in his being where he is today. When he was in school, his interests centered on history and literature.

IN FACT, it was a teacher's lack of knowledge in ancient history that proved to be the deciding factor when Boese dropped out at age 16.

"I found out in 30 seconds that she didn't know a damn thing about history compared to what I knew," Boese explained. A different teacher, he said, might have changed his fate entirely.

"If I had to take a 12th grade chemistry or physics exam today, I'm sure I'd flunk," he said. "I never learned the reasons certain things happen, but I've gotten pretty good at predicting what might happen under certain cir-

cumstances and then testing it out."

After brief periods as a hotel bellhop and a drug store clerk, Boese joined 3M in 1930. He worked there as an office boy for three years. Then he moved to the laboratory where he spent his time washing beakers.

"THAT'S WHEN I found out that a lot of scientists didn't really know what they were doing," Boese joked. "They couldn't have known, or there wouldn't have been that many dirty beakers."

It was 1939 when Boese was given an assignment to develop a noncorrosive back for electrical tape. He didn't know anything about what was involved and spent an entire summer reading on fibers.

"I've always read a lot and never had any trouble getting information I wanted and ignoring that I didn't want," he said.

It wasn't until 1958, when polyester fibers were developed, that the original problem was solved. But in the meantime Boese and his fellow researchers had opened up a whole new area for 3M in nonwoven fibers.

"It doesn't come easy," Boese said of the creative process. "It always was something I had to strain for."

HIS GREATEST incentive, Boese said, was self-imposed guilt.

"I've got to put pressure on myself. An idea gets bouncing around in my head and, before long, it begins to bother me. I have to do something with it," he explained.

"I don't do it easily. I don't do it readily. And I don't do it immediately. Then I get to feeling guilty. But, even then, I don't do anything with that idea until the guilt gets so strong that I can't fight it anymore. Then I'm ready."

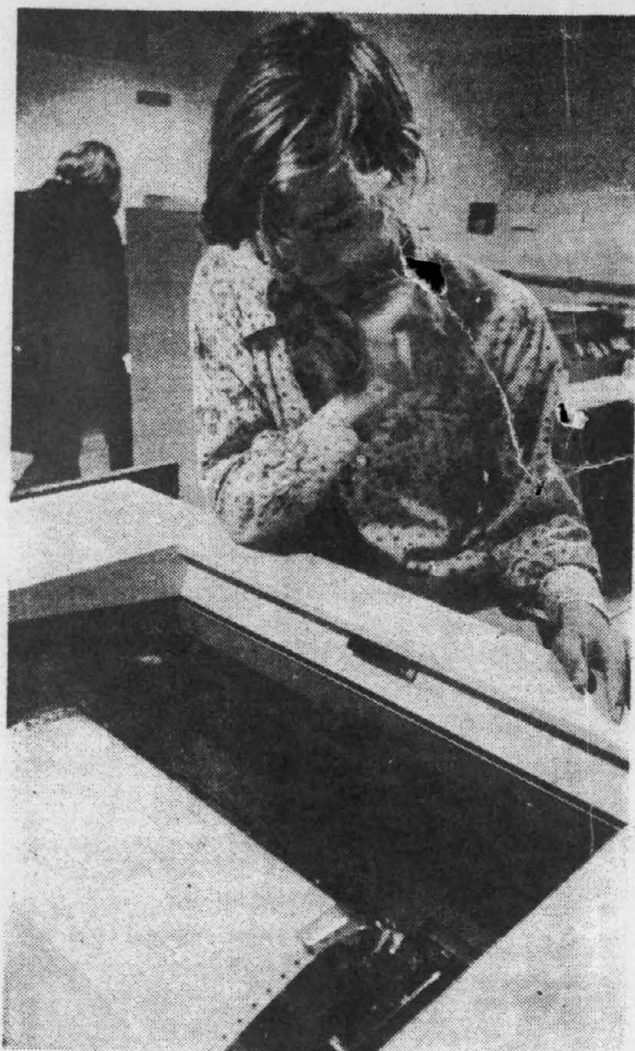
Boese and his wife, Irene, are the parents of three grown children, all of whom finished school. And although Boese thinks it's still possible for someone with as little education as he had to rise to a high position, he is quick to name college as the first step for anyone planning such a career.

But he's also quick to point out what he believes to be an unjustified prejudice against dropouts. Citing televisions commercials and signs on buses to the effect that "to be a dropout is to be nothing," Boese said the approach is poor and of no help to persons who have dropped out.

"DON'T TELL him he's down in a mudhole and kick him," Boese said. "His powers of curiosity and observation should count for something."

"There are many things you can do just with the eyes and ears Mother Nature gave you."

Al Boese should know.



—AP Wirephoto.

SCIENTIST EXAMINES FABRIC

Alvin W. Boese of 3M Co.

From High School Dropout to Corporate Scientist

Alvin W. Boese

Alvin W. Boese, a high school dropout, went on to become, as he says, "a mediocre bellhop, an indifferent drug clerk, a fair mimeo machine operator and a borderline factory inspector."

His career took on a new aspect in the mid-1930s when his employer, 3M Company, put him at a laboratory table and gave him a problem to solve.

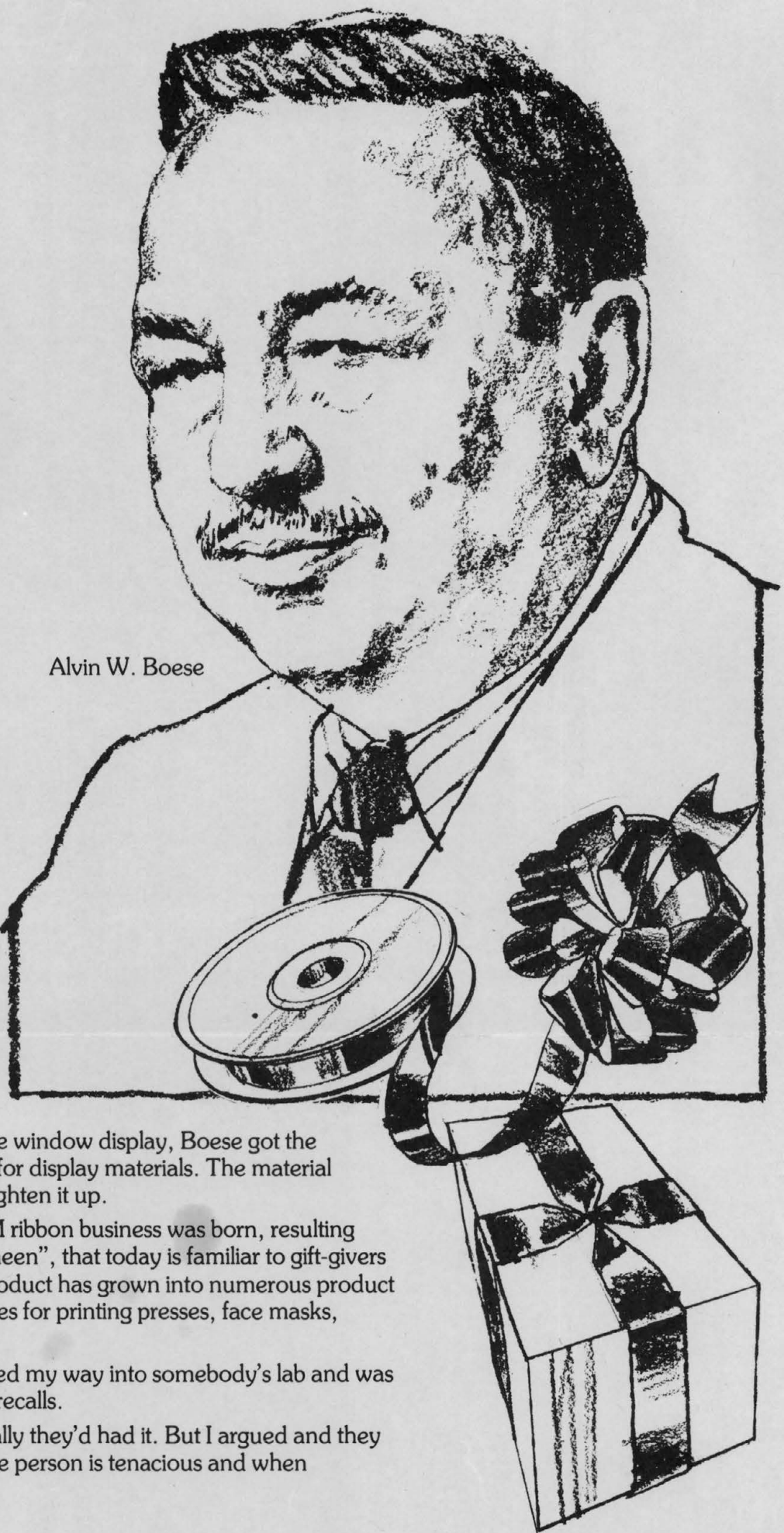
Boese's assignment was to learn the art of paper-making with the hopes that 3M could develop a unique way to produce synthetic fibers. The goal was a better backing for electrical insulation tapes. Boese didn't find a better tape backing, but he did develop an interest in non-woven fibers.

Then one day, while looking at a department store window display, Boese got the idea that his non-woven batting might be suitable for display materials. The material was dyed, and colored flecks sprinkled on it to brighten it up.

In 1944, he slit the material into strips, and the 3M ribbon business was born, resulting later in a non-woven giftwrap ribbon, called "Sasheen", that today is familiar to gift-givers all over the world. Today, that first non-woven product has grown into numerous product lines — "Scotchbrite" abrasives, dampening sleeves for printing presses, face masks, medical masks and tapes, and many more.

"There I was, a high school dropout who'd wangled my way into somebody's lab and was spending hundreds of hours on an idea," Boese recalls.

"The Company put up with this for years until finally they'd had it. But I argued and they listened. Results like this happen when the creative person is tenacious and when management is flexible and patient."



If you know of an interesting historical anecdote from 3M's past, please let us know about it. Write to Anniversary, Employee Communications, Public Relations Department, Bldg. 224-4S, 3M Center, St. Paul, MN 55101.